Siku and the Qalupalik
By Yu May

[Author's note: Some western anthropologists have made visits to the various Inuit and Yupik peoples of northern Canada, Alaska, and Russia. The term "eskimo" was once commonly used to describe these groups as a whole, but has since become outdated. Because some western anthropologists have claimed that the inuit people have a cultural dislike for displays of anger, and have written charming accounts of inuit parents showing remarkable patience toward their young children, this has led to the creation of an internet myth that inuit parents never spank their children, and use storytelling as their sole means of discipline and punishment. The easiest explanation for the rise of this myth is that it serves as a sort of "noble savage" archetype, which can easily be disproved by reading first-hand accounts from inuits, who have both a term for corporal punishment, and have openly discussed corporal punishment as a traditional form of punishment for their children in interviews. Of course, although it is a myth that no Inuit parents use corporal punishment, this does not mean that all Inuits use or favor corporal punishment. This story is meant to be a fairy tale, and therefore no particular tribe or geographic region is identified specifically. This story depicts a sequence of corporal punishment for dramatic narrative purposes, and is not an endorsement of the actions depicted.]

Once upon a time, in the icy expanse of the Arctic, where the sky met the sea in a dazzling dance of colors, lived an sixteen-year-old Inuit girl named Siku. Her days were filled with hard work, though they were not without the simple joys of family life.

However, her nights were haunted by dreams of the unknown, beyond the safety of her home.

Despite her parents' stern warnings about the treacherous ice fields and the dark legends that clung to them, Siku felt an irresistible pull towards the forbidden.

When she was a little girl, Siku's mother, Nuka, (or her "anaana" as Siku always called her) had told her tales of children venturing too close to the dark ice, only for a Qalupalik to snatch them away to its murky home beneath the depths. In Anaana's stories, the wicked Qalupalik always wore a hooded parka, covered with eider duck feathers, and carried a large pouch which they would use to carry away their hapless prey. But as Siku grew older, she decided that such stories were only meant to scare little children, like her eleven-year-old brother, Anik.

One crisp morning, under the pretext of gathering firewood, she chose to take a short cut across the frozen sea ice, far past the "old ice." Siku trusted that she would sense if the ice was too thin. Her father, Aput (or her "ataata," as Siku called him), had taught her to ice fish only last year.

Her heart pounded with both fear and excitement as she felt the waters of the sea hum beneath her feet, enjoying the thrill with each step. The wind whispered secrets in her ears, tales of spirits and creatures that roamed these waters, hidden from human eyes.

As the midnight sun approached, casting long shadows across the frozen landscape, Siku noticed something moving beneath the ice, away from the shore. Ignoring the shiver that ran down her spine, she stepped closer, her breath visible in the cold air. Sure enough, two milk white eyes stared up at her from beneath the ice: a Qalupalik.

Slowly, it knocked against the thin ice from below. Though its movements were hampered by the silver-black waters, nevertheless, the hammering of its fist sent a dense, reverberating tremor through the ice.

"...Doom…Doom…Doom!"

Siku was nearly entranced by the rhythm, but she remembered the tales her mother had told her. "You can't trick me, Qalupalik! I know you want me to step onto the nilas ice, where it's thin enough for you to break through."

Siku was right. That was the Qalupalik's favorite trick. But, unlike an ice rink, arctic ice is never uniform and predictable. And as Siku turned away from the Qalupalik beneath the dark ice, she failed to notice the thin sheet of snow, disguising the color of the ice ahead of her.

As she felt the ice give beneath her boot, Siku remembered what her father had taught her, backed her second foot away, lowering her hands to spread her weight more evenly.

Then, a slimy, webbed hand with long fingernails erupted through the thin ice, and snatched her ankle.

A fish-like woman's head arose, dripping, from the waters. Its laughter sounded like a dying fish gasping for air. "Too old for my first trick…not too old for my second trick!"

Siku kicked at its face, only to feel the ice give way beneath her other leg. She twisted toward the white ice, planning to roll up and away from the black water, but the Qalupalik leapt up after her, wrapping its arms around Siku's leg in a mockery of a maternal embrace. "Come home, my child!"

Siku fumbled for the bone-handled woman's knife at her belt, an ulu. As an all-purpose knife, the ulu was designed for everyday tasks like scraping away ice, not for battle. Nevertheless, when Siku jammed the blade against the Qalupalik's bony arms, scraping away a layer of scaly flesh, the monster howled and slipped back into the waters. It only managed to take one of Siku's boots with it as a prize.

Trembling with relief, Siku gasped for air, and turned to crawl back onto the white ice. Already she began to feel a chill reach her toes. When she heard an echoing voice call her name, Siku tensed, wondering if the Qalupalik had crawled ashore to hunt her above the ice. Then she saw her father, Aput, crawling towards her. She cried out in joy. "Ataata! Here I am!"

…

Aput gave Siku one of his own boots, then led her at a crawl away from the young ice, until they reached the old ice. The moment they reached the shore, Aput scooped her up in his arms as easily as he ever had when she was a baby, and rushed her home, ignoring her pleas to give him his boot back.

When they arrived at their igloo, Nuka, Siku's mother, wasted no time stripping her daughter of her wet clothes and giving her a fresh amautik. As they all sat on furs and warmed themselves by the quliq lamp, Nuka fussed over Aput's red foot for a moment before matter-of-factly declaring that she wouldn't be cutting off any of his toes for him, if he got frostbite. This was her little way of thanking him for saving their daughter, and telling him that he wouldn't lose the foot.

Nuka harumphed as she wrapped Aput's foot in fresh caribou fur socks. "And what were you doing so far out beyond the old ice, I'd like to know!"

"Precisely what I was going to ask Siku."

Siku stiffened, suddenly feeling a chill, despite the warmth of the quliq fire.

Aput's face was implacable. "Well, Siku? Tell us the whole story, from the beginning."

Siku obeyed, hanging her head as she confessed to trespassing across the forbidden ice fields. She hoped that her harrowing tale of meeting a Qalupalik would distract her parents from that detail. Anik was riveted, but when Siku finished her tale, Aput and Nuka let the silence hang. The flame cast flickering shadows across both the icy walls, and her parents' icy faces.

Finally, Nuka and Aput exchanged a single whispered word: "Ânnitilauguk."

Siku knew her fate was sealed. Her mother had requested permission to give Siku a good spanking for being bad, and her father had given the order. Long ago, as a little girl of 8 years, Siku had once been spanked by her mother for wandering towards the ice. And only a year ago, she had watched Anik being spanked for toying with their neighbor's harpoon without permission, and had silently laughed, thinking how foolish her brother had been to earn such a childish punishment.

Aput stood, then gestured to his wife. "You begin, Anaana. I'm going to ask the neighbor to borrow his seal drag. I need time to think. I'll finish with Siku once you've had your say."

Siku thrilled at the mention of the seal drag, remembering how, on the occasion Anik was punished for playing with their neighbor's harpoon without permission, their ataata had calmly warned Anik that if he ever did it again, he would feel a whipping from the leather cord of a seal drag, not just a smacking from an open palm.

Nuka nodded, pulling off her gloves. “Yes, Ataata.”

She was a woman of sturdy build, her hair pulled back tightly from her face, accentuating her stern expression, her hands showing the wear of years spent in hard labor. Wordlessly, Nuka confiscated Siku’s ulu knife with one hand, setting it down with a soft clink of metal against the stone of the qulliq hearth. But at the moment, it was Nuka’s other, empty hand that Siku feared more.

As Siku caught a glimpse of her mother’s calloused palm, she remembered how fearsome those same hands had looked the last time Siku had been punished for disobedience, 8 long years ago. It felt like only yesterday.

Before Siku had time to worry about the prospect of a whipping with a leather cord, her ananna gently guided her up and led her by the arm to the low wooden platform that acted as the family’s sole sitting place.

Nuka shook her head. “Don’t be too long. I’ll keep her *iqquuk* warm for you, until you return!”

At the mention of her daughter’s iqquuk, (the word for “buttocks” in their language), Nuka planted two playful swats over Siku’s parka, then deftly flipped it up, before adding another two not-so-playful swats over Siku’s snowpants, her kamikluuk.

Then, to Siku’s horror, Nuka began to untie the knots that held up Siku’s pants. As the kamikluuk flopped around Siku’s knees, she blushed and snatched at them, only to feel her mother guiding her steadily towards her knees.

But Siku resisted the gentle pull forward, standing up and away from her anaana’s terrible lap, and threw back her hand to hide her undergarments, her seal-fur “ilupaak,” from being seen, but it was no use: Siku had slender, dainty, little hands, but a not-so-slender, not-so-dainty, not-so-little bottom. “Please, Ananna! No!”

Ananna needed neither angry words or blows to silence her disobedient daughter’s protests. Her disappointed, patient look said enough. “Siku, you understand why this must happen?”

Siku felt shimmering tears welling in her eyes. “B-but, I…I only wanted to prove I was brave.”

“I already knew you were brave. You didn’t need to prove you were brave by disobeying. Now, you must be brave, by obeying. Come across Ananna’s lap!”

Two tears trickled down Siku’s cheeks, and instantly crystallized to ice. Siku could fuss, or argue, but although her mother would not force her across her lap, they both knew the outcome was inevitable: Siku knew her duty as well as Nuka knew hers.

“Yes, Ananna. I will obey,” she whispered, her voice barely audible over the crackling fire.

Siku turned her face in shame away from her little brother, who was watching from across the igloo with polite, curious interest. Finally, Siku lowered herself across her ananna's lap, her face turned towards the fire, feeling strangely comforted by the glow. Siku felt the texture of her annana's parka graze against her chin, the warmth of her body a stark contrast to the cold air nipping at Siku from behind.

Satisfied that his daughter had chosen to obey, and submit to her chastisement willingly, Aput stooped to exit the igloo, not wanting to witness his daughter's ordeal any further.

The first strike from mother's palm came, sharp and sure, echoing in the enclosed space of the igloo. Siku gasped, not from the pain alone but from the realization that her own folly had led her to this.

Each subsequent spank was like a steady drumbeat, resonating with the wisdom Siku had ignored; it was like a song. At first, Siku's pride felt the stinging blows more keenly than her backside, but with each sound slap, the prickling heat built, overwhelming the chill of the air. As Siku's thoughts of self-pity melted away, she felt a strange clarity forming in her mind.

Fresh tears welled up in her eyes, not just from the physical pain but from a mix of shame, regret, and the love she felt from her mother, even in this act of discipline. As her cries built to wails, her voice cracked, before she melted into soft weeping.

Siku understood now; she needed this this punishment. She had failed to respect her parents, to respect the dangers that surrounded them.

"I'm sorry, Anaana," Siku managed to whimper, between gasps. The spanking was taking as much out of her as a hard morning of labor.

Nuka paused the punishment, before resting her trusty spanking hand on Siku's quivering legs. With her other hand, Nuka gently stroked Siku's lower back, as if framing her daughter's backside. "You are my daughter, and I love you fiercely," Nuka said, her voice softening, "but you must learn to listen, to respect our ways, for they keep us alive. To make sure you never forget…I must make this spanking memorable. Stand up, Siku, and take off your ilupaak."

As Siku's eyes went wide, she clenched her buttocks, as if trying to hold onto the fur-lined undergarments for a moment longer. But she remembered her promise to be brave and obey. Lifting herself to her feet, shivering, Siku undid the loops that held her ilupaak undergarments in placed, and felt them slip away.

As she neatly folded the ilupaak and offered it up to her anaana, Siku felt the contrast between her hot, stinging lower butt cheeks, which had been unprotected the whole time, and the cool air against her now completely bare bottom. Soon enough, she knew it would be glowing red, and toasty as the fire.

As if she had eyes on the back of her head, Siku knew full well that her little brother Anik could not take his eyes off her nude, spanked backside. But she couldn't be angry with him. "Watch carefully, Anikuluk, and don't repeat my mistake. This is what happens to disobedient children."

Anik nodded, too frightened to blink. "Yes, Ajak." He felt sorry for his older sister, and even admired her stoic courage, but he also agreed she had earned her punishment.

Nuka accepted the undergarments from Siku and stuffed them into her pouch, before silently guiding her repentant daughter back across her knee. This time, Nuka hooked her free leg across Siku's legs to hold her in place, anticipating that Siku would soon be squirming and kicking. "Anik, go and fetch your father. The neighbors must be boring him with old stories. I need to keep Siku's bottom warm and toasty to prepare her for her whipping, so I don't want her waiting all day for him to finish her punishment."

Relieved, but also slightly disappointed, Anik nodded and crouched to crawl through the exit from the igloo.

Nuka was satisfied that Siku was prepared to learn from her transgression, and thus felt no need to heap further recrimination upon her daughter. Slowly, silently, but surely, she began to spank Siku again. For her part, Siku tried her best to hold herself in place, though she did kick her caribou-skin boots against the frosty floor. As the spanking built to a crisp, steady pace, Siku started to twist in place, as if this were a dance. Fresh tears welled in her eyes, and poured so freely, they couldn't freeze against her burning face. Finally, Siku melted into fresh apologies. Though the spanking seemed unforgiving, Siku thought it only fitting. After all, she had ignored the unforgiving nature of the ice fields, and of the dark spirits that haunted them.

Siku thought of how the Qalupalik would have shown her no mercy. Siku believed she deserved no mercy.

Nevertheless, Nuka pitied her daughter, and once she was satisfied that her daughter's bottom was an even-shade of red, she paused the spanking and rested her hand soothingly against Siku's scorched seat. "There, there, Siku. That's enough for the warm up. You may sit down by the fire to await your father's return."

Siku sighed with relief as she was guided back to her feet, before she dimly registered her instructions. "Sit down?"

Nuka answered with a raised eyebrow that said more than words ever could, then reached for her sewing needle case, carved from whale bone. With a single pin, Nuka hiked up the tail of Siku's parka and pinned it in place, so that Siku's red bottom remained exposed.

Shuffling towards the fire, Siku gingerly sat down, and actually felt the snow melt against her glowing, red buttocks. Sure enough, her butt-cheeks screamed in protest, but the coolness of

the melted snow, juxtaposed against the warmth of the nearby dancing fire, felt strangely soothing.

She did not have to wait long. Anik ducked through the entrance, boasting that he had found their father, and began chatting about how the neighbors had to finish whipping their son before loaning them their seal drag, before Aput crawled silently into the igloo and stood up. The bone handle was gripped in his gloved hand, the leather cord was wrapped around his fingers. “Siku, stand and face me.”

Siku felt the snow flakes clinging to her bottom as she stood to attention, quivering. As she stood face to face with her ataata, Siku’s backside faced the fire. The crackling flames quickly melted the remaining flecks of ice, leaving her bare bottom damp and glistening. Already, the cooling numbness was fading, as the warmth restored feeling to her skin. Siku felt a cold sweat at the thought of how the leather cord could easily tear into her unprotected flesh. “Ataata, is that–are you really going to whip me? With that?”

“I have to, Siku. You came within an inch of death today. I would rather whip you within an inch of your life, then lose you forever.”

Siku hunched her shoulders. Already, the fire had dried away the last of the snow, leaving her backside feeling tender, scorched raw from mother’s first spanking. “How many s-strokes do I g-get, Ataata?”

“How many do you think you need to remind you to never wander near the ice fields alone, ever again?”

Siku couldn’t bear to look her father in the eye. She felt fresh tears, not at the thought of the whipping, but at the memory of her own foolishness. “I d-don’t know, Ataata. I d-don’t want to ever do it…ever go there again. Puh-please, don’t…not…”

Siku took a deep breath, and looked Aput right in the eyes. “Please, give me as m-many as you think I d-deserve, Ataata!”

“When I was a boy, not much older than you, I wandered off alone beyond the old ice, and my ataata gave me one hundred strokes with a leather cord. He said a man is lucky to get one hundred years of life, and I deserved one stroke for every year of life I nearly threw away. Do you think you could bear 100 strokes?”

Siku tried to take another breath, but it caught in her throat. She felt dizzy. Finally, she answered, “I’m scared, Ataata. I don’t think I’m strong enough or brave enough to bear it. But I will try my best to obey.”

Aput let the moment hang, then gently wrapped his arms around Siku. Expecting her thrashing to begin right away, Siku was surprised by the gesture, and melted into the embrace, welcoming the strong, musty scent of her father's parka.

"You're far braver than you know, my Siku. One day, you will be able to explore the far reaches of the ice fields, but never alone. I will guide you. If you promise to never wander there alone ever again, then I do not think 100 strokes is necessary. But I will still give you 16 strokes. One for every year of life you have lived, since you should have known better."

As she heard her sentence pronounced, Siku nodded and sank deeper into her father's chest, thankful to be spared the agony of 100 lashes, afraid of the 16 lashes she still had coming, but also in agreement with her father's judgment, all at once. "Yes, Ataata. I know I deserve the punishment."

Aput gently grasped his daughter by the arms, and turned her to face the family's singular long wooden bench. "Very well. I'm proud of you for having the courage to accept what's coming to you, Siku. Go stand before the bench, and rest your hands on it, with your bottom facing the fire."

As Siku obeyed, she felt the chill texture of the wood press against her palms, a sharp contrast to the radiant flames that seemed to lick at her exposed buttocks from behind. She knew full well that soon, all too soon, she would feel the leather cord of the seal drag licking against her, scorching, searing, burning into her naked flesh. She bowed her head, and lifted her hips to present the target. "Please, punish me well. I am ready."

Her mind was ready. Her heart was ready. Her body was ready. But, nevertheless, when Aput whipped the first stroke of the leather cord across both of her bottom cheeks with a snap, Siku discovered that there was no way to fully prepare oneself for the first lash. It felt as if it was ripping across her behind, tugging at the very skin. Siku sucked in a sharp, hissing breath, unable to scream. Then, when she felt a second wave of pain as a throbbing welt rose in a thin line, ending in a loop at the end of her right buttock left by the folded tip of the cord, Siku finally wailed, both confused and terrified by the new sensation.

In that moment, she learned what real courage was. Before, she had thought herself brave when she foolishly wandered into a forbidden realm. She had not known the danger she was in. Now, Siku knew full well the pain and suffering that awaited her, and when all she wanted to do was clutch her bottom, or scream, or cry, or beg, or bargain, or plead, or run away, she chose instead to stay still, and accept what she knew was her justly deserved penalty.

Aput saw his daughter's knees buckle once, before she straightened her legs to reassume her position, trembling. His heart swelling with pride, he whipped her again, twisting his whole arm to add force to the wicked, second stroke. Siku's tears returned, and her resolve not to scream crumbled. The first five strokes landed slowly, so slowly that Siku had time to feel the whole drama repeat itself: the fear of the next stroke, followed by the temptation to struggle to flee,

followed by her determination to stay firmly in place. Her cries rose until her voice cracked, and she melted into racking sobs.

Aput aimed the fight stroke a little lower than he intended, landing across her thighs. By now, Siku's kamikluuk had dropped all the way down to her ankles, tangling across her boots as she kicked reflexively. Between ragged, heavy breaths, she managed to stammer the words, "Forgive me!" but she refused to plea for the punishment to end.

Aput adjusted his grip on the seal drag cord and repositioned himself, aiming backhand strokes so that the folded end of the cord now landed against her left buttock. He didn't want the lashes to break skin, but even though her father was showing some restraint, Siku's buttocks were quickly starting to resemble a roasted haunch of torn, red meat.

Courage alone was not enough. After the tenth stroke. Siku's head sank to the wooden seat, and her knees buckled. Without anger, Aput nodded to his wife, and silently guided Siku up onto the long bench, so that she was lying along it on her tummy. Oblivious, Siku pressed her tearful eyes into her forearms and howled freely, only to feel her mother take her hands gently in hers. Siky knew then that the punishment was not over, and looked up once, her lip trembling, before collapsing on the bench in fresh sobs, wheezing for air as snot ran down her face to join the tears pooling beneath her chin. Her father said something in a stern voice, but Siku could not make it out. Fortunately, the words were not meant for her. Aput told his son to help him hold down Siku's legs, and Anik did, still in awe at the sight of his sister's scorched buttocks before him.

Siku felt her legs being pinned down and twisted once, before she felt her father's left hand pressing against the small of her back to hold her down. She had lost count long ago, but she didn't want to risk more strokes, nor disappoint her father, by resisting. Fortunately, the long ordeal had taken the fight out of her. She was too tired to resist, and dimly she thought how thankful she was for her mother using the "warm up spanking" to wear down her resolve to not cry. Now, it was easier to show the other kind of resolve: the resolve to trust her family, and accept her fate.

Aput delivered the final six strokes in the same slow, steady pace as before: two strokes across her buttocks, followed by two strokes across her thighs, followed by the finale: two perfectly aimed blows, one across each of Siku's sitspots, so that the tip of the cord left a looping welt across the tender flesh between her lower buttocks and upper thighs.

Setting aside the cord, Aput examined his work, then decided to deliver ten final swats with his hand to the same spots to make a more lasting impression. Ironically, this seemingly stern addition felt like a mercy to Siku. When she felt the clap of her father's hand, she mewled once, before recognizing that the whipping must finally be over. Siku was embarrassed to realize she must have collapsed at some point during her punishment. By the end, she found the strength to lift her bottom again, consciously accepting her spanking, as before. As he landed the tenth and final spank with his hand, Aput's heart swelled with pride. "Well done, Siku. You took your

punishment bravely. But you will still have to face the rest of the village, and confess what you did to earn your beating. The other families will want to know what happened to you, and the children will have to be reminded of the dangers of the ice fields, and of the penalty for disobedience.. But there will be time enough for that tomorrow morning. For now, you will spend the rest of the day with your mother. Do as she tells you."

Finally, Aput's stern expression melted as he helped lift his daughter up from the bench. She was too weak to stand, and collapsed into his embrace, sniffling and sniveling. When Aput nuzzled his nose against her cheek, just like he had when she was a baby, she giggled and nuzzled her ataata's cheek with her nose in return.

Aput took Anik hunting, and Siku was left to attend to women's work with her mother for the rest of the day. No matter how tiring Siku's morning had been, her chores still needed to be done. Anaana fetched a hand-carved wooden footstool from outside, and Siku was forced to sit on it uncomfortably, as she helped her mother sew. But the fresh, angry buzzing sensation quickly faded, to be replaced by a dull ache from the welts. Certainly, it wasn't pleasant, but Siku found she could concentrate on her work, so long as she didn't squirm on her seat too much.

Aput and Anik returned near the end of the working hours for the long, arctic day, and the entire family snuggled together in seal furs. As she drifted off to sleep. Siku thought of how tomorrow, she would be brought before the rest of the village families to confess her foolishness. She remembered how a girl her age had once been flogged before the entire village, as punishment for stealing, first by the father of the family she had stolen from, then again by her own father.

Siku felt her heart stop, and knew that she would surely be flogged again tomorrow morning. After all, she had deliberately broken a cardinal rule. But as she felt her mother and father breathing in their sleep next to her, Siku decided that another whipping was the least she deserved. Anything was better than being lost forever in the dark world hidden below the black ice. She fell asleep, praying for courage to face what was coming to her.

The next morning, Siku busied herself before her ataata reminded her of her duty. The whole family exited the igloo, and worked outside. Sure enough, other families, who had heard all about the previous day's trouble, gathered at their igloo, eager for gossip. Mothers brought their children, whispering warnings and lectures about what would happen to them if they ever wandered near the ice.

Siku grimaced, imagining how she would soon be bent over and trashed before every man, woman, and child in her community. As Aput put a hand on her shoulder, she tensed, awaiting the command from her father to assume the position for another whipping. Would he order her to bear her bottom as well, here in the frigid outdoors? The chill air would surely numb her buttocks, and probably burn her flesh as badly as the whipping itself. Aput smiled. "Well, what are you waiting for? Sit down, and tell them your story for the beginning. Leave nothing out."

Siku swallowed, before her tense expression softened slightly, so that she looked more quizical. She stood on tiptoe to whisper into her father's ear. "Aren't you going to flog me, just like that thief got punished?"

"Not unless you need another flogging to teach you to stay away from the ice fields. You don't need another thrashing to remind you, do you?"

Siku shook her head.

Aput nuzzled her cheek with his nose again, his eyes twinkling. "Then of course not. After all: *iqquuk aquppisiginaqtuk.*"

In some innuit cultures, "Iqquuk aquppisiginaqtuk" is an idiom: "Buttocks are for sitting."

As she sat down to tell her story to an expectant audience of children, Siku's heart was filled with gratitude. She was grateful to be alive, grateful for her family, and grateful that she had been spared the trial of a second round of punishment. She was even grateful for the soft twinge that remained from yesterday's whipping.

Most of all, she was grateful to have the privilege to sit down and tell her story. She left nothing out, not even the details of her well-deserved spanking. The story became a favorite tale in the village, and Siku loved to tell it, even when she was old and grey.

[The End]

[Note: the rough draft of this story was made using an AI chatlog. The final draft departs from the original significantly, but I have provided the chatlog for purposes of disclosure.]

Inuit Story

Q
Write a short story about an 18 year old Inuit girl who ignores her parents warnings and explores a dangerous area. She meets a magic creature from Inuit folklore which presents her with a challenge she must overcome before she can return safe home.

Answer
In the icy expanse of the Arctic, where the sky met the sea in a dazzling dance of colors, lived an 18-year-old Inuit girl named Siku. Her days were filled with the simple joys of her village, but her nights were haunted by dreams of the unknown beyond the safety of her home. Despite her parents' stern warnings about the treacherous ice fields and the dark legends that clung to them, Siku felt an irresistible pull towards the forbidden.

One crisp morning, under the pretext of gathering firewood, she ventured out further than she ever had before. Her heart pounded with both fear and excitement as she navigated through the labyrinth of ice, each step taking her closer to the edge of known safety. The wind whispered secrets in her ears, tales of spirits and creatures that roamed these lands, hidden from human eyes.

As the sun began to dip, casting long shadows across the frozen landscape, Siku stumbled upon a cave mouth, its entrance obscured by a curtain of icicles. Ignoring the shiver that ran down her spine, she stepped inside, her breath visible in the cold air. Deep within, she encountered a creature from the tales of her people, the Qalupalik, a water spirit known for luring children to the depths.

But this Qalupalik was different; it had eyes that shimmered with the northern lights and a voice that resonated with the song of the sea. It spoke to Siku, not with malice but with a challenge:

"You seek adventure, yet know not the cost. To return home, you must prove your heart's worth. Sing to me a song of your love for your people, your land, and your spirit."

Siku, though her voice trembled, began to sing. She sang of her love for the Arctic's endless nights, the warmth of her family's igloo, the laughter that echoed in the village, and her respect for the land that gave them life. As she sang, the cave's icy walls reflected her voice back, amplifying it into a chorus that seemed to join with the wind outside.

The Qalupalik listened, its form shifting with each note, until it transformed into a stream of water that flowed gently around Siku, not to take but to guide. It led her out of the cave, back towards the village, where the sunset painted the sky in hues of farewell.

Reaching home, Siku was changed, not by fear but by understanding. She had faced the unknown, sung her truth, and returned not just safe but enriched, with stories to tell and wisdom to share. Her parents saw in her eyes a new light, one that spoke of respect for the dangers and wonders of their world. And from that day, Siku was known not only as the girl who ignored warnings but as the one who learned from the heart of the Arctic itself.

Q:
Write bullet points about what Qalupalik's are and how they trick children. Use real life legends and information about Qalupalik to write your bullet points.

Answer:
Here are bullet points describing Qalupalik based on Inuit folklore and legends:

Origin and Nature:
Qalupalik, also known as Qallupilluit, are legendary creatures from Inuit mythology, considered to be water spirits or sea monsters that inhabit the Arctic waters.

Physical Description:
They are often depicted as having green, scaly, or slimy skin, long hair, and long fingernails or claws. Some tales describe them with webbed hands and fins, resembling a hybrid of human and aquatic creatures.

Clothing and Equipment:
Qalupalik are said to wear an amautik, a traditional Inuit parka with a pouch, which they use to carry away children they capture. This garment is typically made from eider duck feathers.

Tricking Children:
They lure children by making a distinctive, eerie humming sound that is both mesmerizing and terrifying, drawing children towards the water's edge where they can be easily snatched.

Another method involves knocking on the ice to create curiosity or fear, leading children to approach thin or breaking ice where the Qalupalik can grab them.

Purpose in Folklore:
The legends of Qalupalik serve as cautionary tales to keep children from wandering near dangerous water edges or thin ice, where they could face real dangers like drowning.

Fate of Captured Children:

Stories vary on what happens to the children taken by Qalupalik; some say they are eaten, others suggest they are put into a deep sleep or used to sustain the creature's youth.

Cultural Impact:
These tales are part of the oral tradition used by Inuit parents and elders to teach children about the perils of their environment, embedding respect for nature and its dangers in cultural storytelling.

These points encapsulate the essence of Qalupalik as they appear in traditional Inuit narratives, highlighting their role both as mythical beings and educational figures within the culture.

Q
Write a continuation of the story in chapter 2. Siku's parents welcome her home, but explain that as punishment for disobeying and endangering herself, they are going to spank her. Siku is ashamed, but agrees to accept her punishment for disobeying, knowing that it's for her own good.

Answer
Chapter 2: The Price of Curiosity
The sun had barely set behind the horizon when Siku returned, her heart still echoing with the song she sang to the Qalupalik. Her parents, Aput and Nuka, were waiting by the igloo, relief and concern etched into their faces. They rushed to embrace her, their words a mixture of joy and rebuke.

"You've returned, our daughter," Aput said, his voice a blend of warmth and sternness. "But you ignored our warnings, risking not just your life but our peace of mind."

Nuka nodded, her eyes reflecting the seriousness of the situation. "We must teach you the weight of your actions. For your safety, for our community's harmony, there must be consequences."

Siku, feeling the weight of her adventure and the reality of her choices, lowered her head. She knew the traditions, the balance between love and discipline that guided their lives in this harsh environment. "I am sorry, mother, father," she murmured, her voice thick with shame but also understanding. "I accept my punishment, for I see now the danger I brought upon myself."

They led her inside, where the warmth of the igloo contrasted sharply with the cold lesson about to be learned. The fire crackled, casting shadows that danced with the silent acknowledgment of the moment's gravity. Nuka took her daughter's hand, guiding her to sit by her side.

"As your parents, it's our duty to protect you, even from yourself," Aput explained, his tone firm yet filled with love. "You will receive a spanking, not out of anger, but to remind you of the boundaries we set for your safety."

Siku nodded, tears in her eyes not just from the anticipation of the punishment but from the realization of her folly. She understood the love behind the act, the care woven into what might seem harsh to outsiders. She lay across her mother's lap, her face turned towards the fire, feeling the sting of each strike as a reminder of the ice's unforgiving nature.

Afterwards, Nuka held her close, whispering words of love and education. "This pain is fleeting, but the lesson must last. Remember this day when your heart yearns for the unknown. There is adventure in wisdom, too."

Aput added, "Your bravery is not in question, Siku. It's your judgment that must grow. You've seen beyond our warnings, now you must see the wisdom in them."

The night passed with Siku in contemplation, her body sore but her mind clearer. She knew that this was not just about punishment but about learning, about growing into the kind of person who could respect the dangerous beauty of their world. Her parents, through their strict but loving discipline, had not just scolded her but guided her back to the path of wisdom.

The next day, Siku would wake with a new resolve, her adventure with the Qalupalik not just a tale of encounter but a lesson in respect for the land, her community, and the love that sometimes hides behind stern lessons.

Q:
List household objects and tools owned by real Inuit tribes. Describe each object’s purpose and shape briefly.

Answer:
Here are some common household objects and tools traditionally used by Inuit tribes, along with their purposes and brief descriptions:

Ulu (ᐅᓗ):
Purpose: Primarily used for cutting food, particularly meat, and for preparing animal hides for clothing.
Shape: Features a crescent-shaped blade, often made of stone, bone, or steel in modern times, with a handle perpendicular to the blade, shaped to fit comfortably in the palm.
Quliq (Soapstone Lamp):
Purpose: Provides light and heat in the igloo or tent. Used for cooking and melting snow for water.
Shape: A shallow, bowl-like structure made from soapstone, with a rim for holding the wick (made from moss or cotton grass) and oil (typically seal or whale oil).
Snow Knife (ᐊᖏᓪᓗᓕᒫᓂᖅ, Annngalulluk):
Purpose: Used for cutting and shaping snow blocks to build igloos or other snow structures.
Shape: Long, flat, and often made from bone, antler, or later steel, with a handle at one end for leverage.

Snow Goggles:
Purpose: Protects the eyes from snow blindness caused by UV light reflecting off snow and ice.
Shape: Made from wood, bone, or antler, these goggles have narrow slits to reduce light exposure, resembling a mask with a strap or string to secure around the head.
Harpoon:
Purpose: Essential for hunting seals, walruses, and whales, with detachable heads for retrieval.
Shape: Consists of a long wooden shaft with a sharp, often replaceable, pointed head attached by a line, sometimes with a float to prevent prey from diving deep.
Bow Drill:
Purpose: Used to start fires through friction, crucial for warmth, cooking, and light.
Shape: Includes a bow, a spindle, and a hearth board. The bow's string wraps around the spindle, spinning it to create friction and heat.
Seal Skin Boots (Kamiit):
Purpose: Provides insulation and waterproofing in the harsh Arctic environment.
Shape: High boots made from seal skin, with soles made from tougher skin for traction, often with fur lining for warmth.
Fish Spear:
Purpose: Used for fishing through ice holes in winter or in shallow waters during other seasons.
Shape: Typically has multiple prongs or a single long pointed tip, attached to a long wooden handle.
Seal Drag (Toggle Handle):
Purpose: Aids in dragging heavy seal carcasses back to camp.
Shape: A handle or toggle, often carved from antler or bone, attached to a rope or strap for pulling.
Arrow Straightener:
Purpose: Used to straighten bent or damaged arrow shafts before use.
Shape: Often a V-shaped or U-shaped tool made from bone or antler, with grooves to fit the arrow shaft for straightening.

These tools highlight the Inuit's adaptation to their environment, utilizing available materials like bone, stone, wood, and animal hide to meet their daily needs.

Q
List more wooden or sculpted objects Inuit families might own.

Answer:
Here are additional wooden or sculpted objects that Inuit families might traditionally own:

Kayak Models:
Purpose: While actual kayaks were made for hunting, small models served as toys or decorative items.
Shape: Miniature versions of the full-sized kayak, often detailed with little hunters or harpoons.
Amulets or Talismans:
Purpose: Carved for protection or good luck, often representing animals or spirits.

Shape: Small, portable, and varying in design; might be animals, humans, or abstract shapes, typically made from wood, bone, or ivory.
Inukshuk Models:
Purpose: Used as navigational aids or markers in real life, smaller models could be kept as cultural symbols or for decoration.
Shape: Miniature versions of the human-like stone figures, sometimes carved from wood or bone for indoor use.
Dance Masks:
Purpose: Used in ceremonial dances or storytelling, embodying spirits or ancestors.
Shape: Often carved from wood, with exaggerated features, painted, and adorned with fur, feathers, or other materials.
Whalebone or Ivory Carvings:
Purpose: Decorative art, storytelling, or as a form of income in later times.
Shape: Could be anything from animals (like seals, walruses, or polar bears) to human figures or scenes from Inuit life, shaped with great detail.
Needle Cases:
Purpose: To store and protect sewing needles, crucial for repairing clothes and making new ones.
Shape: Cylindrical or elongated, often with a carved or decorated cap, made from wood or bone.
Drum Sticks:
Purpose: Used in traditional drumming for celebrations or shamanic rituals.
Shape: Long, slender, with one end sometimes carved into a figure or animal, made from wood or bone.
Sled Models:
Purpose: As toys for children or as detailed replicas for display.
Shape: Small, detailed sleds with runners, sometimes with figures or dogs attached, carved from wood.
Toys (Animals, Humans):
Purpose: For children's play, teaching them about their environment and culture.
Shape: Simple carvings of animals, people, or scenes from daily life, made from whatever materials were available, including wood.
Fish Hooks:
Purpose: For fishing, especially before metal was widely used.
Shape: Carved from bone or wood, sometimes with a barb to secure the catch.
Game Pieces:
Purpose: For traditional games like the Inuit string game or other board games.
Shape: Could be simple carved counters or more intricate pieces representing animals or people.

These objects reflect the Inuit's resourcefulness, cultural practices, and the intimate relationship with their environment, where art, utility, and symbolism often intertwine.

Q:

Write a detailed scene in which Siku's mother spanks Siku as punishment for disobeying her instructions to beware the dangerous ice fields. Include physical descriptions and details such as Siku's thoughts and feelings about the spanking.

Answer:
Inside the igloo, the air was thick with the smell of melting snow and the warmth of the quliq, its flame casting flickering shadows across the walls made of ice. Siku sat on a pile of furs, her heart still racing from her encounter with the Qalupalik but now heavy with the knowledge of the consequences awaiting her.

Nuka, her mother, stood before her, her face a mask of concern and duty. She was of sturdy build, her hands showing the wear of years spent in hard labor, her hair pulled back tightly from her face, accentuating her stern expression. In one hand, she held an ulu, its crescent blade gleaming in the firelight, but it was the other, empty hand that Siku feared more.

"Siku, you understand why this must happen?" Nuka's voice was calm, but there was an edge to it, a reminder of the gravity of Siku's actions.

Siku nodded, her eyes downcast. She was ashamed, not just for the adventure she had taken but for the worry she had caused. "Yes, Mother," she whispered, her voice barely audible over the crackling fire.

With a slow, deliberate motion, Nuka placed the ulu aside, the metal clinking softly against the stone of the hearth. She then sat on a low wooden stool, pulling Siku across her lap. Siku felt the roughness of her mother's parka against her cheek, the warmth of her body a stark contrast to the cold air.

"You risked too much, my daughter," Nuka began, her words a mix of disappointment and love. She lifted Siku's parka, exposing the lower part of her back. The air felt colder suddenly, or perhaps it was the anticipation that chilled Siku to the bone.

As Nuka raised her hand, Siku's mind raced. She remembered the thrill of the ice fields, the beauty of the cave, the Qalupalik's challenge, but now those moments seemed distant, overshadowed by this impending punishment. She knew it was well-deserved; the ice was not just beautiful but deadly, and her actions had endangered not only herself but the peace of her family.

The first strike came, sharp and stinging, echoing in the enclosed space of the igloo. Siku gasped, not from the pain alone but from the realization of her folly. Each subsequent spank was like a drumbeat, resonating with lessons she had ignored. Her skin burned, her pride hurt more than her body, but with each strike, she felt a strange clarity forming in her mind.

Tears welled up in her eyes, not just from the physical pain but from a mix of shame, regret, and the love she felt from her mother, even in this act of discipline. She understood now; this was not just about punishment but about learning to respect the dangers that surrounded them.

"I'm sorry, Mother," Siku managed between breaths, her voice trembling. She wasn't just apologizing for her adventure but for the worry, the fear, the break in trust.

Nuka's hand paused, resting on Siku's back, a silent acknowledgment of her words. "You are my daughter, and I love you fiercely," Nuka said, her voice softening, "but you must learn to listen, to respect our ways, for they keep us alive here."

After a moment, Nuka helped Siku to sit up, wrapping her in an embrace. Siku felt the warmth of her mother's arms, the comfort of being forgiven, the sting of her skin a reminder of the lesson learned. She knew this moment was about more than just the physical discipline; it was about understanding her place in this harsh, beautiful world, and the responsibilities that came with her adventurous spirit.

As they sat there, the fire continued to crackle, a light in the darkness, much like the love and lessons that would guide Siku through her life.